

# Relaxed, happy after 30 years of spying for Russia Son tells of Mr Philby's life in Moscow

By HENRY STANHOPE

He was relaxed, confident, happy, an ideological spy who worked for the Soviet Union for 30 years without taking so much as a rouble in reward, and had now come in from the cold.

This is the image of Mr. "Kim" Philby, now revealed to be the most significant Russian agent ever to pierce western intelligence, presented in London yesterday by his eldest son, John, the most recent of the rare visitors to Mr. Philby's Moscow home.

I spoke yesterday with Mr. John Philby, aged 23, a photographer, as he left his modest top-floor flat in an unfashionable Hampstead road, about the 10 days he spent with his father to whom he delivered a letter from *The Sunday Times*.

## Normal life

"He lives in a flat in Moscow", he said, "but I will not say where. I stayed in my hotel and visited him just as an ordinary tourist. We saw each other every day. He works for the Novosti news agency, writing features about the Far East. He writes in English and then the features are translated and put out by Novosti in the usual way."

Was he in contact with the Soviet intelligence network?

"I do not know. I suppose he obviously must have some contact. He leads a normal life, goes to work in the normal way. We talked a lot about Moscow. He did not give details about spying activities for the west. I tried to avoid asking him."

Mr. Philby was quiet, withdrawn. He said he was in sympathy with his father's views, but was not a member of the Communist Party. He is married to a girl who works as an animator for cartoon films, and is now in Canada.

Mr. Philby senior is 55, but apparently looks younger; his stutter at one time severe is much better.

His son laughs at the idea that his father feels any regret. "He leads a pretty reasonable life", he said. "He never went out a great deal anyway. Now he reads a lot, goes to the ballet now and again."

## Of little use

He did not seem to think Mr. Philby had much contact with Mr. Donald Maclean in Moscow. He asked his father if he had seen Mr. George Blake but Mr. Philby did not make it clear. "He does not see many British people in Russia at all", he said.

"The Russians seem to treat him very well. The Foreign Office have not contacted me since my return."

I would like to go back to see my father again, naturally."

The disclosure that his father was a communist had surprised him.

Jerome Caminada, who was in Beirut as Middle East correspondent of *The Times* during the last two years before Mr. Philby left there for Russia in January, 1963, writes:—

British reaction to Mr. Philby's career, or more accurately the last part of it, makes one think not of shutting the stable door after the horse has gone, but of repeatedly opening it to look for a horse that was not there.

At the time that Mr. Philby was smuggled on board a Russian ship on a stormy night in Beirut and disappeared I would say that he was about as little use to Russian Intelligence as any other British or American newspaperman there—and a good deal more dangerous.

I am referring only to the period after 1956 when he went to Beirut as a correspondent for British weekly publications, though possibly the same could be said about his previous four or five years in Britain, when apparently he no longer served British intelligence.

Mr. Philby's comparative uselessness in Beirut springs, I suggest, partly from his geographic location, but more from his private habits. He was in the Middle East which, oil-producing though it is, and though then still of some strategic importance to the west, represents only one region of many round the world.

## Drinking habits

He may have been asked to give information on British intelligence in that region, but there he could scarcely have had overall global knowledge of British or American operations.

The fact that Mr. Philby drank, and the exceptionally high consumption of liquor in the Philby apartment, is most relevant to Britain's interests in this story, and is not thrown in here as personal gossip. His weakness did not alter his habitual courtesy and kindness, nor change his deep-voiced stammer, but it surely made him less and less reliable as a Russian "customer".

Philby, I suspect, felt this. When, late in 1962, he was one of a press party that spent two days bounding over rocks and sand in royalist Yemen to discover that the deposed Imam was still alive, he persistently refused to take a drop from the hip flasks some of us carried. This may have been because he was in Muslim country where his father's name was much respected, or because for once



Guy Burgess.



Donald Maclean.

it might pay to keep his eyes and ears open.

In Beirut and other towns, however, Mr. Philby's way of living was well known, assuredly as much to the Russians there as to others. When finally he disappeared, it may have been at least partly because they considered that his habits and his knowledge of the past made him a security risk to them, just as he once considered Mr. Guy Burgess to be a danger to him in Washington.